# Spotlight on transformation

A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

## The Human Resource Strategy for Developmental Services

People are at the centre of a transformed developmental services system — people with a developmental disability, their families and the dedicated professionals who support them. This edition of Spotlight explores a new human resource strategy that will help attract, develop and keep people in this rewarding field.

## Why do we need a human resource strategy?

Finding people with the skills and enthusiasm to work in developmental services is getting harder. High turnover and an aging workforce mean that we have to change how we promote and grow this field.

To build a modern system of community-based supports, we need people who are skilled, adaptable and committed. The new Human Resource (HR) Strategy for Developmental Services will help us maintain a qualified workforce that will grow with the system.

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Ontario

## How did it start?

In 2007, the ministry hired a consultant to research recruiting, training and retaining people who work in developmental services. At the same time, the ministry's Expert Panel on Training studied the best ways to build the skills of people who work at agencies. The expert panel brought together organizations, agencies and agency umbrella groups, front-line support workers and education representatives.

The Provincial Network on Developmental Services — which represents 250 agencies across Ontario — met with the ministry to examine the research of the consultant and expert panel. As a result, the ministry and Provincial Network decided to develop a human resource strategy for the developmental services workforce.

The HR Strategy for Developmental Services officially launched in March 2008 with a 10-year work plan. Over the next two years, the ministry will work with everyone in the developmental services field to design a creative and effective strategy.

## What is it?

The HR Strategy is a 10-year plan to improve how we recruit, train and retain staff in the developmental services field. The Strategy will outline ways to build a skilled and engaged workforce, who will be qualified to deliver superior services and supports. It will actively promote developmental services careers, encouraging more people to join this rewarding field.

## How will it work?

Committees from the developmental services field will plan solutions for the following human resource (HR) needs:

- Determining basic values and skills — known as core competencies — for staff
- Ensuring consistent agency-based training across Ontario
- Developing the best HR practices
- Marketing careers in developmental services
- Recommending standards for education programs

## Who are the committee members?

Each committee has about 12 members from across the developmental services field, including representatives from the ministry. The Provincial Network collected and evaluated nominations for membership. They selected members who would represent the diverse backgrounds, regions and interests of people throughout the developmental services field.

The vision, values and goals of the developmental services transformation will guide the work of the committees. Their recommendations will enable the developmental services values of citizenship, fairness, accessibility, sustainability, accountability and safety.

## Southwestern Regional Centre, 1961-2008

In October, the Southwestern Regional Centre in Chatham closed after operating for 47 years.

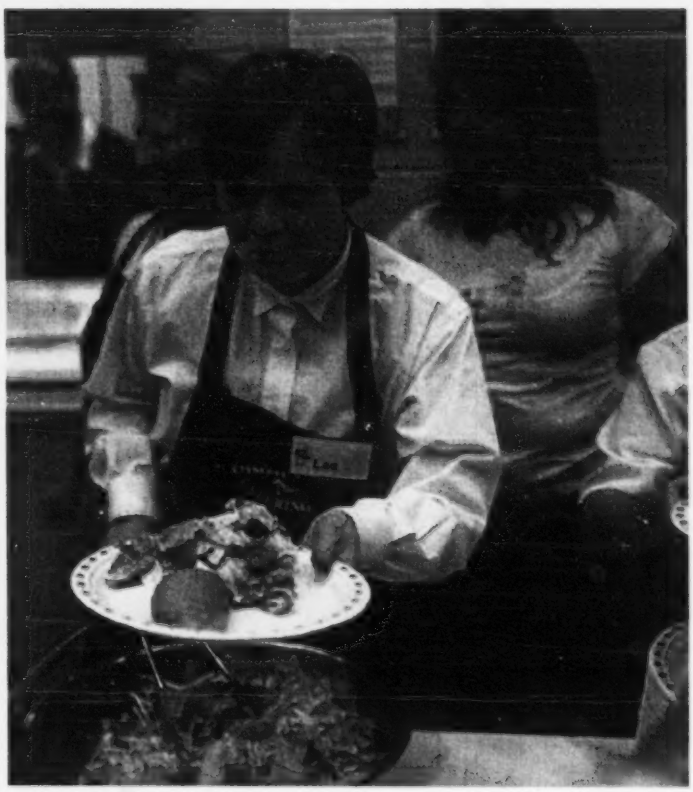
When it first opened, the Centre was named the "Ontario Hospital School for Retarded Children at Cedar Springs". It was run by the Ministry of Health. In 1974, the Ministry of Community and Social Services took over, renaming it the Southwestern Regional Centre

The Centre had 1200 residents at its peak in the mid 1970s. The last few residents moved from the centre on October 30, 2008.

## What about families who hire staff directly?

In January 2008, the ministry set up a panel to review the needs of families who hire their own support staff. The panel was composed of family members and ministry representatives. Its goal was to develop tools and resources for these families.

The panel completed its work in June 2008, and provided its recommendations to the ministry. The ministry responded with a work plan that was presented to the panel.



In addition to the work of the panel, HR Strategy committees will consider the needs of families who hire staff directly when doing their work.

## What will the HR Strategy achieve?

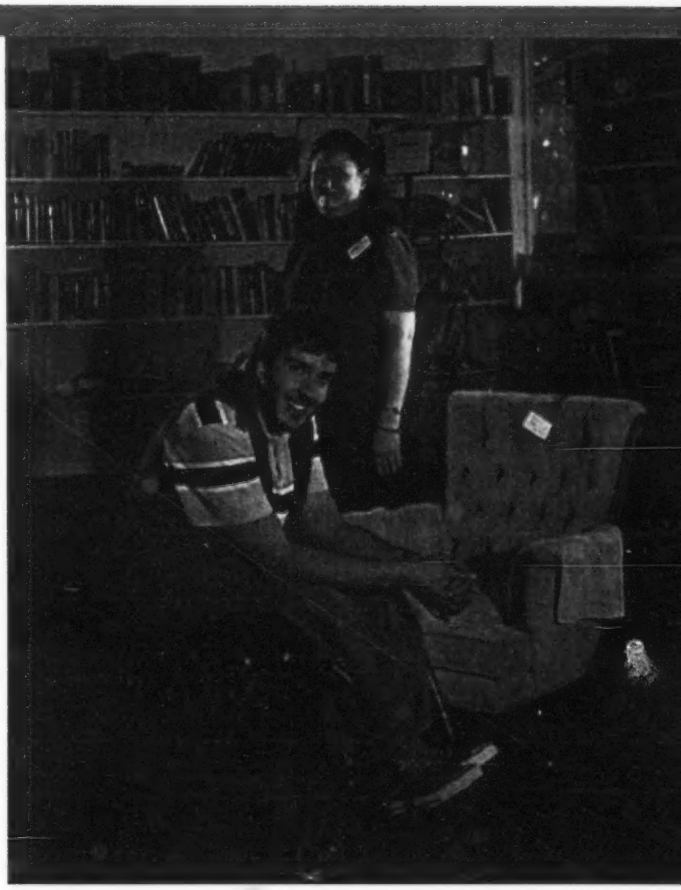
By 2017, the HR Strategy will result in:

- A pool of qualified and engaged professionals supporting people with a developmental disability
- Consistent developmental services education, training and development programs across Ontario
- Advanced management skills across the field
- An association of professionals dedicated to serving people with a developmental disability

## How will you measure success?

The Provincial Network is negotiating a partnership with Queen's University to provide research support for the HR Strategy. Along with helping committees during the planning stage, Queen's would evaluate how well the Strategy achieves its goals over the 10-year term. The regular feedback would help the ministry change what is not working and improve on what is.

## HR Strategy Committees



### Human Resource Strategy Steering Committee (HRSSC)

- This committee will help move the HR strategy forward.
- It will monitor the work of the different committees and bring it all together into one coordinated plan.
- Membership consists of chairs or delegates from each committee and panel.
- Colette Kent of the ministry and Steven Finlay of the Provincial Network Human Resources Sub-committee are the co-chairs.

The following committees will meet regularly for the next two years:

### Core Competencies Committee

- This committee will determine the basic values and skills — known as core competencies — needed to work in the field.
- A consultant was hired to develop core competencies for developmental services staff by early 2009.
- The consultant held 12 focus groups throughout Ontario with people working across the field, from front-line staff to directors.
    - The consultant learned what competencies staff rely on to succeed in their jobs.
- On December 3, 2008, the consultant also held focus groups with family members and self-advocates to understand the competencies they need from staff.
- After studying the consultant's reports, the committee will set the core competencies for developmental services staff.

**Agency-based Training Committee**

- This committee will research existing training programs in the field to recommend suitable programs for use province-wide.
- Agency-based training will include orientation for new staff, professional development opportunities, mentoring, job shadowing and leadership courses.
- Agencies will also offer training programs for staff hired directly by families.

**Best HR Practices Committee**

- This committee will determine the best ways to manage human resources (HR) across the field.
- First, it will investigate HR practices used in agencies across the province and research leading practices in other fields.
- Then, it will recommend the best practices for recruiting, training, retaining and recognizing developmental services professionals.
- Finally, the committee will explore how to circulate the best practices throughout Ontario.

**Marketing and Awareness Committee**

- This committee will create a plan to promote careers in developmental services so that more people will consider joining the field.
- It will market the new career paths available in a modern, transformed system.
- Agencies, families, individuals, educators and unions will be involved in making people aware of developmental services careers.
- The committee will also look at recruiting beyond Ontario and Canada, which would include recognition for foreign-trained professionals.

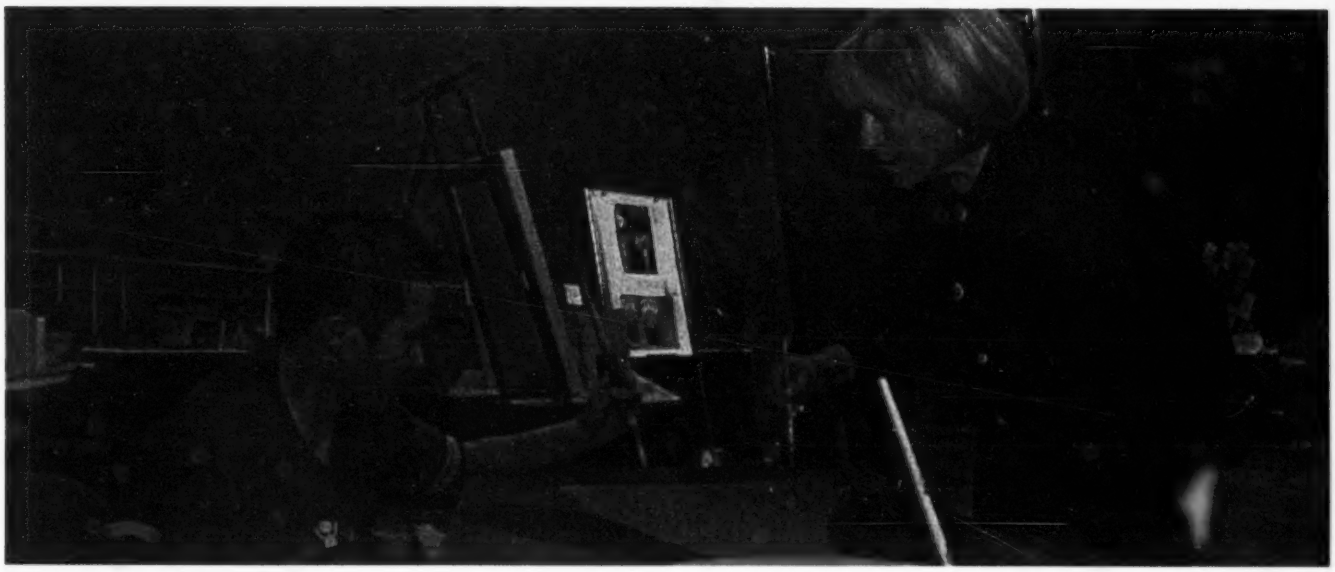
**Program Standards Committee**

- This committee will recommend program standard updates to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as required.
- It will also work with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to identify a process to apply agency training credits to the Developmental Services Worker Program.

## Calling All Artists: Show off your artistic abilities!

If you are an artist with a developmental disability and you've created an original painting, drawing or photograph, this is your opportunity to get it displayed. Adults with a developmental disability who live in Ontario are welcome to send us artwork that we may feature in ministry publications. If we use your artwork, we will include your name and the title of the piece (if it has one) in the publication.

Interested? Please send us a **copy** of your painting, drawing or photograph by **May 1, 2009**. There are a few things you have to do to submit your artwork. You may want someone to help you with this.



**Here are the rules:**

1. You must be a resident of Ontario, have a developmental disability and be 18 years of age or older.
2. You can only submit an electronic copy of your artwork. We'll accept copies in jpeg and gif format. Files should be at least 300 dpi.
3. Your artwork must be an original without any copyright claims. That means that it must be your design, not a copy of someone else's.
4. You, the artist, keep your copyright. But we will have the nonexclusive right to publish your artwork without extra permission from you.
5. If you need help turning your artwork into a jpeg or gif, contact **Allan Devlin** at: **allan.devlin@ontario.ca** or **416 325-1950**.

People with a developmental disability have amazing abilities and we want Ontario to see them.

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## Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs)

*RDSPs will help people with a developmental disability and their families build financial security for the future.*

In 2007, the federal government announced a new type of registered savings plan to help individuals and families save for the financial security of children and adults with disabilities. The federal government's new Registered Disability Savings Plans (RDSPs) are now available.

Here in Ontario, we've announced changes to our social assistance programs so that people with disabilities can take advantage of RDSPs.

Ontario's changes mean that:

- People with an RDSP can still be financially eligible for social assistance, and
- People on social assistance can take money out of an RDSP without affecting their social assistance payments.

## Where can we learn more?

To learn more about RDSPs, visit the Canada Revenue Agency's website at: **www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/rgstrd/rdsp/**. Or call the general enquiry line at 1-800-959-8281 (TTY service 1-800-665-0354).

For more information about RDSPs and Ontario's social assistance programs, please visit the ministry's website at: **www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/social/what/rdsp**.

**Contact us**
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Developmental Services Branch
4th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 1E9
Tel: 416-327-4954
Fax: 416-325-5554
Toll-free tel: 1-866-340-8881
Toll-free fax: 1-866-340-9112
E-mail: **DStransformation.mcss@css.gov.on.ca**

This bulletin is also available online at: **www.ontario.ca/community**